



County of San Bernardino



Ensen Mason CPA, CFA • Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector

DOLLARS & SENSE

ATC Quarterly Newsletter

Second Quarter, 2020

April - May - June 2020

AS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC TAKES HOLD, WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER...by Ensen Mason

What a challenging first quarter 2020 we have had! There isn't a person alive that this crisis hasn't had a significant impact on and everybody's experience has been different. Here at ATC, I think we have been especially challenged. We all have families and personal lives that require our attention, but we also provide critical services to the public and now is when the public most needs those services.

Each of our nine divisions have very different capabilities and responsibilities. Some serve the public directly, others do not. Some can work remotely, others cannot. Adjusting to this ordeal has required each of you to adapt your work and personal lives in different ways. I want you to know that I see what you have gone through and are going through now and appreciate everything you do on behalf of our Department and the people we serve.

We have all experienced challenging times. We got through those and we'll get through this together. Thank you for everything you do.

- Ensen



In This Issue

- Coronavirus Pandemic
- "Where Do My Property Tax Dollars Go?"
- Anniversary Celebration
- Board of Supervisors Resolution
- Fun Fact
- ATC Coffee and Tea Program
- Book Club
- Collecting Taxes In A Closed Building
- ATC Predecessors
- Employees of the Month

"WHERE DO MY PROPERTY TAX DOLLARS GO?"

Ensen Mason presented his innovative new website feature **"Where Do My Property Tax Dollars Go?"** to the Board of Supervisors as a special presentation at their regularly scheduled February 11, 2020 Board meeting. This GIS mapping based tool allows anyone to immediately access the distribution of a parcel's property tax dollars in detail down to tax rate area. The Board was very appreciative of seeing this live demonstration lifted straight from the ATC website.



You can watch the presentation by clicking on this link: <https://youtu.be/yRUlecNgTYY>



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San Bernardino County
Tax Collector

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF
COMBINED AUDITOR-
CONTROLLER/TREASURER TAX
COLLECTOR'S OFFICE

ATC Ensen Mason presided over the Ten-Year Anniversary Celebration of the creation of his office following consolidation of the Auditor-Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector departments into one unified department. ATC Mason is the Department's 53rd leader since its inception in some form in 1853. Ensen was sworn into office January 7, 2019 following a vigorous campaign to promote transparency in ATC operations and transform the way the Department communicates with the public.

The Board of Supervisors consolidated ATC on January 26, 2010, in a bold move to save money and improve services during a severe recession. As a result, ATC has produced overhead savings of \$11,873,877 during budget years 2009-10 through 2019-20, and a net 19 positions were eliminated through efficiencies and economies of scale.

The festivities took place on January 16, 2020 at the ATC office located at 268 West Hospitality Lane in San Bernardino. Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman was the Master of Ceremonies for the event, and special guest star Mark Hall-Patton, Museum Administrator for the Clark County Museum and Authenticator for the History Channel's "Pawn Stars", provided a colorful commentary for the large crowd of over 200 guests and employees.

ATC was also honored by the presence of Board Vice Chair Josie Gonzales; Supervisor Janice Rutherford; Supervisor Gonzales' Chief of Staff, Dan Flores; Supervisor Robert Lovingood's Chief of Staff, Laurie Marsden; Supervisor Rutherford's Chief of Staff, Phil Paule; Supervisor Hagman's Chief of Staff, Katherine Kolcheva; County Chief Operating Officer, Leonard X. Hernandez; County Chief Financial Officer, Matthew Erickson; and retired former County Auditor/Controller, Errol Mackzum.



ATC Mason Introduces
Chairman Hagman



ATC Mason, Pawn Star Mark Hall-Patton,
Chairman Hagman

ATC MASON RECEIVES UNPRECEDENTED BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS RESOLUTION



SAN BERNARDINO County

Resolution

By unanimous consent of the Board of Supervisors, the following resolution is adopted:

WHEREAS, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors voted on January 26, 2010, to merge the Departments of Auditor-Controller and Treasurer/Tax Collector into the combined Department of Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector (ATC); and

WHEREAS, the new ATC Department then underwent more than five years of internal reorganization and movement from three separate locations to a new combined location for all services at 268 W. Hospitality Lane in San Bernardino; and

WHEREAS, the combined ATC has saved the County \$11,873,877 in overhead costs through elimination of 19 duplicative budget positions, improved customer service, provided faster response times for taxpayer requests, created efficiencies in internal operations, and improved coordination and cooperation between its nine divisions; and

WHEREAS, newly elected ATC Ensen Mason was sworn into office on January 7, 2019, in a ceremony presided over by Supervisor Curt Hagman, and during his first year in office ATC Ensen Mason increased communication and transparency by publicly publishing the first Annual Report on Fraud, Waste, and Abuse; greatly expanded the use of social media; and created a GIS mapping collaboration application between the Property Tax and Information Technology Divisions entitled "Where Do My Property Tax Dollars Go?", thereby allowing any taxpayer to see the detailed apportionment of property taxes customized online of any address in San Bernardino County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Bernardino, State of California, does hereby commend the ATC Department on a successful first decade of service to the people of San Bernardino County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors congratulates ATC Ensen Mason for a successful first year in office resulting in better service to taxpayers, greater transparency and communication within the Department and to the citizens of San Bernardino County, and improved employee morale and sense of accomplishment.

DATED: January 7, 2020


Curt Hagman, Chairman

Robert A. Lovingood

Dawn Rowe


Josie Gonzales

Janice Rutherford

Dan Flores

The Board of Supervisors presented Ensen Mason with this Resolution on January 7, 2020 commending a decade of excellence of the ATC Department in service to the taxpayers of San Bernardino County and recognizing ATC Mason's outstanding leadership during his first year in office. This special recognition was the first time the Department has been so honored.



Ensen being honored by the Board of Supervisors

Fun Fact About ENSEN MASON

Those who know me know I tend to be a tech nerd. VR headsets have been gaining in popularity, but I resisted. I imagined them being a Wii you wear on your head, and I always thought the Wii was a bit on the silly side. Call it curiosity or a feeling of being left out, but I finally made the leap. Just to see what the hoopla is about ya know?

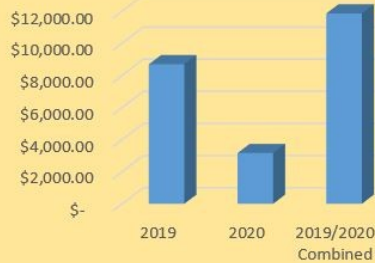


I'm still not going to be the guy who spends hours with a box on my head dancing around in some virtual world. But I did spend a fair bit of time flying airplanes, scuba diving and exploring historical and cultural sites.

I believe it could be an amazing educational tool. Instead of a teacher telling students what happened in history or what a certain place of scientific or social value is, they can show them. Walk them through, pointing things out as if they were a tour guide. It doesn't even need to be a place you could actually go. It could be in space, the center of the Earth or places in history. And it doesn't need to be in a classroom, it can be done from anywhere with an internet connection.

- Ensen

ATC Coffee and Tea Program Funded by Mr. Mason



The Coffee/Tea Program at ATC continues to receive wide eyed approval from all ATC employees. ATC Mason personally paid \$8,669 in 2019 and \$3,163 so far in 2020. This amounts to \$11,832 for coffee and tea k-cups along with related supplies for the enjoyment of every single ATC employee on every single day at work.

BOOK CLUB Recommended Read by ENSEN MASON

The book selection for this quarter is **The 10 Big Lies About America** by Michael Medved. In this bold *New York Times* bestseller, acclaimed author and talk-radio host Michael Medved zeroes in on ten of the biggest fallacies that millions of Americans believe about our country – in spite of incontrovertible evidence to the contrary.

I have noticed that the media (including social media) seems to have outsized power in our society. People can only internalize so much, so they tend to internalize the sensational. Often what comes to be accepted as fact is really a distorted representation of fact. These “facts” get repeated so many times that they get woven into our culture. But take a deep dive and you learn there is a lot more to it. That's what Mr. Medved attempts to do with 10 curated topics. I don't agree with everything he believes, but the topics are interesting.

See ATC Librarian Tracy Calentti to check out your copy today!

- Ensen

COLLECTING TAXES IN A CLOSED BUILDING?

Chief Deputy Tax Collector Diana Atkeson has done an outstanding job of leading her team through the first ever property tax installment deadline rush with our building closed to the public! The first ten days of April and December are the busiest each year at ATC as thousands of taxpayers descend upon our building to pay their property taxes in person prior to the tax payment penalty deadline. But when we closed our building to the public on March 13, 2020 the question was, how could we accept their payments? By every other means possible is the answer!



We stepped up advertising of alternative options including eCheck, checks in the mail, telephone payments, credit cards and money orders and stressed the fact that in person payments could not be accepted.

Diana also teamed with Central Collections Division Chief Sonia Hermosillo to temporarily repurpose some of her Debt Collectors to augment the phone team handling a greatly increased volume of calls.

Our benchmark to the Board of Supervisors and the taxpaying public annually is receiving 96% or more of the year's tax charge. That represents very good work in a normal year, and we were at 97% in April last year. This is the most unusual and difficult year in history, yet ATC just crossed the 96% goalpost in mid April 2020 thanks to the hard work and ingenuity of our Tax Collector Division.

ATC's 14 Most Wanted Predecessors

Want to make a quick \$100 bucks? ATC Mason has a crisp \$100 bill from his personal funds for anyone who can find a photo of one of his 14 predecessors listed below. Last year, ATC Mason gathered portraits of the fifty three men and women who have served in some form of this position since formation of San Bernardino County in 1853. However, there are 14 portraits that we have been unable to find, and we would love to feature them along with all the others. The portraits line the first floor hallway of the ATC Building located at 268 Hospitality Lane in San Bernardino and the public is welcome to view them anytime during normal business hours of 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday.



If you find one of the missing portraits, please submit the photo to Tracy Calentti at tracy.calentti@atc.sbcounty.gov for verification.

ATC Employees of the Month (EOM) —January, February, March, April, May

All of these outstanding employees will receive an ATC Mason departmental polo shirt, parking in the special EOM parking spot next to the building, their photo on the wall located on the first floor near the employees' entrance, lunch with a guest of their choice and the ATC, and of course bragging rights as Employee of the Month. Congratulations to all of them!

Darren Scott, January 2020, EOM



Darren is a Functional Analyst II with SAP Center of Excellence where he is assigned to Enterprise Financial Management System (EFMS), and responsible for the implementation of Grants Management. He is responsible for supporting Funds Management and Grants Management modules, deploying additional content and building new reports within the Business Warehouse module, and most recently has been working with the County administrative Office on the preparation of the SAP Budget and Planning module.

Darren often receives recognition from end users on his great customer service. He displays a positive attitude, demonstrates great patience with users, can apply training to real-life scenarios, and has extensive SAP knowledge. No matter the size of difficulty of the task, or whether it is an individual or group, Darren will give 100% to ensure the goal is achieved.

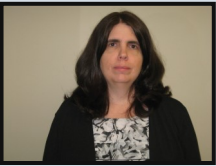
Menaka Burkitt, February 2020, EOM

Menaka has worked for ATC since 2012. She has promoted through the ranks from Internal Auditor III, Internal Auditor IV, and Supervising Internal Auditor III, to her current position of ATC Manager for Internal Audits Section. Menaka has shown exemplary customer service in every role she has had with ATC. She has been commended by other County departments, external entities, and ATC for her professionalism and pleasant professional attitude.



As ATC Manager, Menaka strives to create a work environment for her team that is focused on a common goal. She welcomes input from the team on audits performed and asks for input on future audits. Menaka emphasizes open communication and expects knowledge to be shared with the entire team. Menaka is a strong leader who handles difficult situations well, while maintaining a professional demeanor.

Wanda Molton, March 2020, EOM



Wanda began her career with the County in 2012 and joined ATC soon after in 2013 as Secretary for Central Collections Division. Wanda is a dedicated employee who regularly goes above and beyond to assist all members of the Central Collections Division. She makes sure staff have what they need to perform their jobs, including ordering supplies, fixing/formatting documents, submitting helpdesk tickets, making suggestions for improvement, and identifying potential problems.

In a busy environment with many interruptions, Wanda can always be counted on. Wanda gets along well with everyone and is diligent in meeting important deadlines. If she hears of problems, issues, or concern, Wanda takes the initiative to find a solution. Research and locating information is a snap, as Wanda maintains impeccable records and history of the Division.

Anita Valdez-Rojas, April 2020, EOM

Anita is an Office Assistant III with Central Payroll. She began her career with Central Payroll in August 2006.



Anita works closely with a team of Office Assistants who have the greatest interaction with Central Payroll's customers. Anita effectively managed these changes and needs by consistently providing our customers with excellent service. On a daily basis, she answers a high volume of customer phone calls regarding technical payroll issues. She takes the initiative and goes the extra mile to walk customers through the use of EMACS Self-Service setups and navigation to EMACS forms. As unique questions arise, Anita attempts to understand the issue and seek the proper solution. Her can-do attitude and multi-tasking abilities are significant factors contributing to the Central Payroll team's ability to meet our customers' needs in a timely manner.

Glen Lastimosa, May 2020, EOM



Glen joined the County of San Bernardino in 2000 as a Fiscal Clerk II with Property Tax and has held multiple positions in various ATC divisions over the years. He returned to the Property Tax Division in 2013 as an Accountant where he continued to gain experience and promoted through the ranks to his most recent position, Supervising Accountant II.

Glen is a dedicated employee who goes above and beyond to ensure the division's goals and objectives are accomplished. His knowledge in property tax functions, system applications and advanced skills in Microsoft Access and Excel make him a valued asset and team member of the Property Tax Division. He works closely with ISD, IT and management to troubleshoot system issues, perform system testing, and implement system enhancements to ensure approximately \$3.1 billion in taxes are allocated to countywide taxing agencies correctly. Glen has a positive attitude, is a team player and doesn't hesitate to provide assistance where needed.